

## IT'S TRUE!

Before 1976, the Tulip Poplar was the unofficial State Tree for Kentucky. However, it had never been officially designated by the state legislature.

In response to the efforts of Joe Creason, Columnist for The Courier Journal, Gov. Julian M. Carroll in 1976 designated the Kentucky Coffeetree as the Kentucky State Tree.

As the 1994 session of the General Assembly was considering designating the Tulip Poplar, Kentucky's State Tree, students from Bethel Elementary School in Bath County (the burial place for Joe Creason) strived to keep the Kentucky Coffeetree the State Tree. These students were worthy representatives for the late Mr. Creason because, thanks to their efforts, on Arbor Day 1994, Gov. Brereton C. Jones proclaimed the Kentucky Coffeetree as Kentucky's State Heritage Tree.

Now, Kentucky has two officially recognized trees: the State Tree—the Tulip Poplar - and the State Heritage Tree—the Kentucky Coffeetree!



**Tulip Poplar**



**Kentucky Coffeetree**

## USES

High-quality Tulip Poplar is still in demand for such uses as veneer, plywood, and furniture material. There is a considerable amount of Tulip Poplar, which is not suited to quality veneer or furniture. Because framing lumber rules are based on strength, not appearance, the Tulip Poplar has properties that make it valuable to the construction industry. The heartwood has a natural resistance to decay and a reputation for being resistant to termites.

## CULTURE

Tulip Poplar seeds must go through a winter, or be germinated under controlled conditions, in order to grow. Under controlled conditions, germination in moist sand and a temperature range of 32 degrees to 50 degrees Fahrenheit for periods of 70 to 90 days should produce satisfactory germination. Tulip Poplar seeds retain their ability to germinate for 4 to 7 years.

# Tulip Poplar



# Kentucky's State Tree



Natural Resources and  
Environmental Protection Cabinet

The 1994 session of the General Assembly amended KRS 2.095 Section 1 to read as follows: The Tulip Poplar is named and designated as the Kentucky State Tree. This became law March 9, 1994.

### ***TULIP POPLAR FACTS***

The Tulip Poplar is noted for its tulip-shaped leaf, fast growth, and tall straight bole. Due to its straightness and durability, the Tulip Poplar was used for building cabins, barns, and furniture by Kentucky's early settlers.

The Tulip Poplar is one of the most plentiful trees of Kentucky's forests. It grows best in moderately moist, well drained, loose-textured soils. It rarely grows in very dry or very wet situations. Stream bottoms, coves, and moist north and east slopes are ideal sites. Good sites can produce trees of 18 to 24 inches in diameter in 50 to 60 years. The Tulip Poplar can reach heights of more than 120 feet. It does not grow in shade and once it becomes established, its fast growth enables it to outgrow much of its competition. The Tulip Poplar is established through natural seeding or by planting.

The Tulip Poplar is a good landscape tree because of its straight form and showy flowers. It makes a good shade tree and is desirable for ornamental purposes. The Tulip Poplar maintains a narrow, oval crown as it grows.

### ***LEAVES***

The leaves are four to six inches in diameter, mostly four-lobed, tulip-shaped, alternate, simple, and borne on long slender stems. Their surface is yellow-green above and pale yellow-green below. The leaves usually have a waxy texture. The leaves turn yellow in autumn.



### ***TWIGS, BUDS AND BARK***

The bark of older trees is dark gray, streaked with deep, narrow chalky-white depressions.

The twigs are greenish to reddish-brown, slender and aromatic. Small leaf scars encircle them.

The buds are flat, one-half inch long, greenish to reddish brown. The buds resemble a duck's bill.



### ***FLOWER***

The flowers are two and one-half inches across. The tulip-shaped petals are light orange with a deep yellow center. The scented flowers appear in mid-spring toward the top of the tree.



### ***SEED***



The seed is approximately two and one-half inches long, yellowish-brown, cone-like structure of winged seeds that appear in early autumn and persist into winter.

### ***DID YOU KNOW...***

... that the Tulip Poplar is also known as yellow-poplar or tuliptree?

... that the Tulip Poplar is not a poplar at all? (It is a member of the magnolia family!)

... that the Tulip Poplar is the tallest tree in the eastern United States?

... that the Tulip Poplar may reach 300 years of age on good sites?

... that the Tulip Poplar has distinctive value as a honeytree? A tree 20 years old can produce 8 lbs. of nectar, which will make 4 lbs. of honey.